
Education Committee

ESSB 6821

Brief Description: Creating a work group to explore the creation of college and career readiness centers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Schmidt, Weinstein, Kohl-Welles, Pridemore, Benton, Delvin, Rasmussen and Franklin).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with other state education agencies, to convene a work group to explore creation of college and career readiness centers that provide additional learning opportunities for students up to age 21 at risk of not graduating with their peers.
- Requires a report to the State Board of Education and the Legislature by January 10, 2007.

Hearing Date: 2/20/2006

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

High School Graduation Requirements. The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes minimum high school graduation requirements for public schools. Students must complete at least 19 credits in specified content areas, do a culminating project, and prepare a high school and beyond plan. Beginning with the class of 2008, students will also need to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) by meeting the state academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Local school districts may establish additional requirements. Students can enroll in public schools until they complete a diploma or turn 21.

High School Programs in Community and Technical Colleges. Washington's community and technical colleges have a broad mission that includes workforce training, academic degrees, and adult education. The colleges also offer three types of high school programs:

High School Completion. High School Completion is a program to enable adults to earn a regular high school diploma issued by the college. Students can take both high school and college level courses to complete their requirements. The SBE graduation requirements apply to these

diplomas, except that students over the age of 21 are exempt from the CAA under SBE rules. Students under age 18 need a release from their high school to enroll.

Drop-Out Retrieval. Seven colleges offer high school programs under contract with a local school district for students aged 16 to 21 to make up the credits they need to graduate. Students who complete the school district's graduation requirements earn their diploma from the district.

Technical High Schools. Bates, Lake Washington, and Clover Park Technical Colleges each operate a program for juniors and seniors that offers career-technical training and courses necessary to receive a diploma.

Summary of Bill:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Higher Education Coordinating Board must convene a work group to explore the creation of college and career readiness centers. The purpose of the centers is to provide additional learning opportunities for students in middle school, high school, and beyond up to the age of 21 who are at risk of not graduating with their peers. The work group considers:

- where centers would be located;
- how to administer the educational program at the centers to provide a flexible learning environment that accommodates the needs of students;
- funding mechanisms;
- eligibility criteria;
- how to provide information to students, parents, and the community about the centers; and
- how a community-school district partnership could help implement college and career readiness centers and how demonstration projects could be used to pilot a partnership.

The work group includes representatives of the OSPI, the SBE, teachers, faculty, administrators, counselors, Educational Service Districts, institutions of higher education, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the business community, minority groups, federally recognized tribes, skills centers, and other interested organizations.

The OSPI must report its findings to the SBE and the Legislature by January 10, 2007.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.